



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

September 18, 2007

The Honorable Board of Directors
Los Angeles County
Regional Park and Open Space District
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Directors:

**ALLOCATE FOURTH SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT SPECIFIED EXCESS FUNDS TO
THE MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY AND
AUTHORIZE AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION OF EXCESS FUNDS GRANTS TO
THE CITIES OF LONG BEACH AND PARAMOUNT FOR PROJECTS
ALONG THE LOS ANGELES RIVER
(FOURTH DISTRICT – 3 – VOTE MATTER)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Allocate Fourth Supervisorial District Specified Excess Funds in the amount of \$7,500,000 to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for the following five projects:

In the City of Long Beach (\$5,000,000):

- \$500,000 for the development of Baker Mini Park
- \$1,000,000 for the development of the Wrigley Greenbelt
- \$1,000,000 for acquisition of land for the Drake/Chavez Greenbelt
- \$2,500,000 for development of the DeForest Wetlands

In the City of Paramount:

- \$2,500,000 for the expansion and development of Dills Park.
2. Authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation, in his capacity as Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to award grants to the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount when applicable conditions have been met and to administer the grants as of the date of this action and pursuant to procedures in the Procedural Guide for Specified and Per Parcel Projects.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Approval of the first recommendation will allocate \$5,000,000 in Specified Excess Funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) to fund four projects along the Los Angeles River in the City of Long Beach and will also allocate \$2,500,000 to supplement funding for the City of Paramount's Dills Park Expansion Project. The MRCA, which is the designated recipient of Specified Excess Funds for projects along the Los Angeles River under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996 (1996 Proposition), will assign the right to apply for the funds to the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount.

The City of Long Beach requests \$5,000,000 in funding for four projects.

- The Baker Mini-Park Development Project will develop a 1.34-acre neighborhood mini-park in the Wrigley Heights area of Long Beach near the Los Angeles River and the 405 Freeway. The project consists of site grading and the installation of irrigation, playground equipment, landscaping, and picnic tables. The cost of the project is \$500,000.
- The Wrigley Greenbelt Development Project is located along the east bank of the lower Los Angeles River between Willow and 34th Street. The property, owned by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District is nearly a mile long and covers nearly eight acres. The project will enhance the site with the installation of native plants, a multipurpose decomposed granite trail, drinking fountain, and storm water runoff swale. The greenbelt will also provide a rest area with bike racks for bicyclists riding the Los Angeles River (LARIO) Trail. The cost of the project is \$1,000,000.

- The Drake/Chavez Greenbelt Acquisition Project consists of the acquisition of .78 acres of land along the lower Los Angeles River to begin to connect 23-acre Chavez Park in the south and 6-acre Drake Park in the north to 16 acres of recently acquired land to form a 46-acre greenway and parkland area on the east bank of the lower Los Angeles River. When completed, the greenbelt will link downtown Long Beach with the LARIO Trail with wetlands and trails providing a unique area of the Los Angeles River where salt water meets freshwater. The total cost to acquire the .78 acre commercial parcel is \$2,700,000. The City of Long Beach requests \$1,000,000 to supplement existing city funding of \$1,700,000 (\$850,000 from a Rivers and Mountains Conservancy grant, \$582,175 of 1996 Proposition Los Angeles River funding, \$200,000 Excess Funds previously awarded by your Board on March 1, 2005, and \$67,825 in City Redevelopment funds.)
- The DeForest Wetlands Development Project will recreate 16 acres of historic wetlands, scrub and woodland habitat, provide water quality improvement, passive recreational amenities and interpretive enhancements while retaining flood control properties to create a river parkway from the existing DeForest Park south to Del Amo Boulevard. The project is part of a larger lower Los Angeles River parkway plan that will implement multipurpose wetlands in several Los Angeles River flood detention basins. The project will add much needed public open space and wildlife habitat in the northern section of the City and provide a rest area for those using the LARIO Trail. The cost of the project is \$2,500,000.

The City of Paramount requests \$2,500,000 for the Dills Park Expansion Project. The Dills Park project is a multi-phased acquisition and development project adjacent to the Los Angeles River in the City of Paramount. The expansion portion of the project began in 2000 and has allowed the City to expand Dills Park by 2.5 acres. The \$2,500,000 requested is needed to assist the City in developing the new open space and renovating the existing park which will complete the Dills Park Expansion Project. The expanded area of the park will extend the Dills Park Trail and provide a natural setting with a large meadow, picnic areas, restroom, and playground. The renovation of the existing parkland will convert this area into a nature walk that connects to the expansion area and provides improved accessibility onto the Los Angeles River Trail. The entire park will employ water management practices and materials that reduce water usage, reduce runoff and provide filtered water percolation and drainage into the Los Angeles River. Including the \$2,500,000, \$1,000,000 in a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and \$500,000 in State grant funds, the total cost for the Dills Park Expansion Project is \$4,000,000.

The MRCA, which is the designated recipient of Specified Excess Funds for projects along the Los Angeles River under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996 (1996 Proposition) will assign the right to apply for the funds to the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount for the five projects identified.

The 1996 Proposition requires that agencies to which funds were allocated under the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 encumber all such funds prior to receiving grants of Excess Funds.

It is also recommended that the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to award grants to the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount, for the identified projects, when applicable conditions have been met, such as grantee qualifications and consistency between the projects and requirements of the 1996 Proposition, and to administer the grant under procedures previously approved by your Board.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The proposed recommendations further the Board approved County Strategic Plan Goal No. 1 (Service Excellence), Goal No. 4 (Fiscal Responsibility), and Goal No. 5 (Children and Families' Well-being) by allocating Excess Funds for enhanced environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities along the Los Angeles River in the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount in the Fourth Supervisorial District.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Sufficient appropriation for the grants in the amount of \$7,500,000 is budgeted in the Fourth Supervisorial District portion of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District Excess Funds Project Fund, HD6.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The 1996 Proposition provides a method for determining each fiscal year the amount of funds available in the following fiscal year to fund capital improvement projects in addition to the amounts specifically identified for projects in the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996. The recommended grants would be funded from the Excess Funds available to the Fourth Supervisorial District for highest priority regional open space and recreation projects including projects along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries.

The Board may establish additional conditions on grants of Excess Funds. The Director of Parks and Recreation would be authorized to award grants when all applicable conditions have been met. Any funds allocated by the Board, but not encumbered by award of a grant contract in the same fiscal year, shall be available for allocation by the Board in the following fiscal year.

Your Board approved a Procedural Guide on June 17, 1997, to govern the administration of Regional Park and Open Space District grants for Specified and Per Parcel projects. This Procedural Guide would appropriately govern the administration of the recommended additional grants as well.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

Grant Project Agreements will be entered into and administered under authority delegated to the Director of Parks and Recreation and pursuant to the Procedural Guide approved by the Board in 1997. The Project Agreements will be approved as to form by County Counsel.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The recommended projects will provide additional environmental stewardship and recreation opportunities along the Los Angeles River in the Cities of Long Beach and Paramount in the Fourth Supervisorial District.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed actions are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that the actions do not meet the definition of a project according to Sections 15378 (b)(4)(5) of the State CEQA Guidelines because the actions are administrative activities for government grants which by their terms do not involve any commitments to any specific projects which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

All projects funded by the District are also required to comply with CEQA. The City of Long Beach is the lead agency for the Baker Mini Park, the Wrigley Greenbelt, the Drake/Chavez Greenbelt and the DeForest Wetlands Projects. Paramount is the lead agency for the Dills Park Expansion Project. As such, both cities will be required to prepare appropriate environmental documentation for their respective projects.

The Honorable Board of Directors
September 18, 2007
Page 6

CONCLUSION

Please instruct the Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board to return one conformed copy of this action to the Chief Executive Office, Capital Projects Division, and to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,



Russ Guiney
Director, Parks and Recreation

RG:IV:LB:REGIONALPARKOPENSPOCEDISTRICT(Long Beach & Paramount BL)

c: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors (30)
County Counsel